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Letter dated 19 December 2001, from the Chairman of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1373 (2001) concerning counter-terrorism addressed to the President of the Security Council

The Counter-Terrorism Committee has received the attached report from Gabon, submitted pursuant to paragraph 6 of resolution 1373 (2001) (see annex).

I should be grateful if you could arrange for this letter and its annex to be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Jeremy **Greenstock**
Chairman
Counter-Terrorism Committee

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Annex

Note verbale dated 18 December 2001 from the Permanent Mission of Gabon to the United Nations addressed to the Chairman of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1373 (2001) concerning counter-terrorism

The Permanent Mission of Gabon to the United Nations presents its compliments to the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1373 (2001) and has the honour to transmit herewith the report on action taken by the Government of Gabon in implementation of the resolution (see appendix).

Appendix

Report on action taken by Gabon in implementation of Security Council resolution 1373 (2001)

The entire Gabonese community was deeply outraged at the horrifying terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 in the United States.

On that fateful day, on which terrorists struck at the financial and military core of the United States and at its people, burying thousands of men and women under tons of steel and rubble at the Twin Towers in New York and at the Pentagon in Washington, the Office of the President of Gabon issued a communiqué stating that "the Head of State and the people of Gabon join as one with the international community in condemning these terrible acts in the strongest possible terms. Profoundly shocked, the President of the Republic, Mr. El Hadj Omar Bongo, presents his sincere condolences to the President of the United States, Mr. George W. Bush, to the Government and people of the United States, and to the families of the victims".

In solidarity with the international community, the Government of Gabon, meeting as the Council of Ministers on 5 October 2001, approved the establishment of an ad hoc committee for the implementation of Security Council resolution 1373 (2001) of 28 September 2001 on international terrorism and adopted a set of diplomatic, legal, security and financial measures.

I. Diplomatic action

The President of the Republic, Mr. El Hadj Omar Bongo, after addressing to his United States counterpart, Mr. George W. Bush, a personal message of solidarity and support, gave the Minister of State and Minister for Foreign Affairs, Cooperation and Francophonie instructions with a view to the establishment of a crisis committee to monitor developments day by day, while serving as a permanent interface between diplomatic missions and the Gabonese authorities.

This crisis committee, which is chaired by the Minister of State and Minister for Foreign Affairs, Cooperation and Francophonie, is made up of the Ministers of the Interior, Defence, Justice and Transport, and the representatives of the Office of the President and of the Office of the Prime Minister.

In implementation of Security Council resolution 1373 (2001), a focal point was set up in order to facilitate contacts between the interlocutors. The individuals designated for this purpose are as follows:

At the level of the central services:

- Mr. Marc Adolphe Doumi Mandatsi
  General Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
  Tel: 74-23-74 and 26-10-54
  Fax: 74-23-75

At the level of the Permanent Mission of Gabon in New York:

- Mr. Alfred Moungara Moussoutsi, Counsellor
  Tel: (212) 686 9720
  Fax: 689-57-69

The diplomatic missions have also given assurances with respect to any relevant information, and the contact persons at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs are as follows:

- The General Secretary (26-10-54)
- The Director, United States (76-17-44 and 26-10-46)

In Africa, Gabon welcomed the initiative launched by the Senegalese President, Mr. Abdoulaye Wade, for an African conference on international terrorism.

To that end, the Gabonese delegation led by the Vice-President of Gabon, Mr. Divungui Didjob Di Dinge, played an active role in the work of the conference, held in Dakar from 15 to 17 October 2001.

The Gabonese delegation took a consistent position in that connection: consistently condemning terrorism, one of the worst forms of human barbarity, and consistently stating that terrorism cannot be justified by any particular circumstances.

Gabon believes that the Convention of the Organization of African Unity on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism, adopted in Algiers on 14 July 1999, has been an adequate instrument for effectively

combating this barbarous evil in Africa. The Convention can be amended, if necessary, to take account of the new international situation and of Security Council resolution 1373 (2001).

Addressing the United Nations General Assembly, at its fifty-sixth session, Mr. Jean Ping, Minister of State and Minister for Foreign Affairs, Cooperation and Francophonie reaffirmed Gabon's determination to combat international terrorism by all possible means, whether military, diplomatic or political.

Accordingly, Mr. Ping continued, Gabon unreservedly supported Security Council resolutions 1368 (2001) and 1373 (2001), as well as the adoption of a general convention on terrorism.

He said that the coalition that had been set up could unquestionably help in the struggle against terrorism.

Also as a matter of solidarity, the international community must find appropriate solutions to international problems that might be used as pretexts by certain radical groups.

In conclusion, Mr. Ping said it was urgent to take appropriate action with a view to finding solutions to current conflicts and economic and social problems.

II. Legislative action

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Cooperation and Francophonie proposed that the Government should consider updating the current legislation, particularly the Criminal Code and the Code of Criminal Procedure, to enable Gabonese courts to suppress terrorism effectively, a matter that is not expressly covered in current Gabonese positive law.

The desirability of implementing this proposal was recognized *erga omnes*, and an in-depth feasibility study of the matter is being carried out by Ministry of Justice experts.

Gabon has also set in motion the process of acceding to and ratifying most of the international instruments directly or indirectly connected with combating international terrorism.

The following instruments were thus adopted by the Council of Ministers with a view to their expeditious transmission to Parliament for ratification:

- The Tokyo Convention of 1963 on Offences and Certain Other Acts Committed on Board Aircraft;
- The Montreal Convention of 1971 for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts against the Safety of Civil Aviation, and the 1984 Protocol thereto;
- The Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Crimes against Internationally Protected Persons, including Diplomatic Agents, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 14 December 1973;
- The Convention against the Taking of Hostages, adopted by the General Assembly on 17 December 1979;
- The Vienna Convention of 1980 on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material;
- The Montreal Protocol of 1988 for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts of Violence at Airports Serving International Civil Aviation, which complements the Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts against the Safety of Civil Aviation;
- The Rome Protocol of 1988 for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts against the Safety of Fixed Platforms located on the Continental Shelf;
- The Rome Convention of 1988 for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts against the Safety of Maritime Navigation;
- The Montreal Convention of 1991 on the Marking of Plastic Explosives for the Purpose of Detection;
- The International Convention for the Suppression of Terrorist Bombings, adopted by the General Assembly on 15 December 1997;
- The Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism adopted by the General Assembly in New York on 9 December 1999;
- The Convention of the Organization of African Unity on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism.

III. Security measures

On the evening of 11 September, the very day on which the New York and Washington attacks took

place, security coverage was stepped up outside United States diplomatic premises and United States diplomats' residences, in Gabon and outside the diplomatic missions and consular posts in Gabon of the countries belonging to the anti-terrorism coalition.

The security and intelligence services were placed on alert and surveillance was strengthened so as to ensure better protection of persons and property.

Appropriate instructions were given concerning intelligence, in order to establish cooperation and the exchange of information with the various governments forming part of the coalition with respect to security issues.

Surveillance and control at Libreville International Airport and the port of Owendo were stepped up and strengthened by means of additional security personnel.

This increased vigilance was extended not only to airfields in the interior of the country, but also to inter- and intra-urban police controls and to land, maritime and river border controls.

In early December, at the request of Gabon, the French police department for international technical cooperation sent two experts from Paris to provide comprehensive training in detecting false travel papers, not only for immigration department personnel of the aviation and border police, but also for personnel involved in aeronautical sector operations.

Furthermore, a study will be conducted with a view to identifying all security problems, particularly as regards the vulnerability of the Léon Mba International Airport in Libreville.

At the level of surveillance within Gabonese territory, monitoring has been strengthened with respect to high-risk individuals and groups belonging to foreign communities likely to breach Gabonese internal security.

An exhaustive census has been conducted of nationals of so-called high-risk countries and of Gabonese nationals who have stayed or studied in such countries and may have maintained links with them.

The Economic Intervention Service, whose purpose with respect to economic and financial matters is to carry out monitoring in the area of financial flows, particularly as regards corruption and money-laundering, will be operational shortly.

IV. Financial action

The Ministry for Economic and Financial Affairs has given strict instructions to banking establishments with a view to achieving more stringent monitoring of assets and currency movements, with the aim of tracking all types of direct or indirect financing of terrorist activities based in Gabon.

These measures, under the International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism, adopted in New York on 9 December 1999, provide unquestionable proof of the Gabonese authorities' firm intention to accede to and implement this important international instrument.

Conclusion

The action taken and legislation adopted recently by Gabon demonstrate, should it be necessary, the country's determination to combat terrorism in all its forms, by contributing to international efforts undertaken particularly with a view to halting the flow of funds for financing terrorism.

To that end, Gabon will as in the past fully implement the relevant United Nations resolutions and further emphasize its cooperation in the endeavour to combat terrorism that has been initiated with the United States authorities.